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Icy winds to come

7 January 2009

After the recent heavy snow, icy conditions and severe frosts, strengthening easterly winds will make it feel bitterly cold as we head through the weekend.

Richard Young, Chief Forecaster at the Met Office says: “Temperatures will struggle to rise above freezing across most of the country by day, with severe and penetrating frosts at night. Strong east to north-easterly winds will pick up across many areas later Friday, making it feel bitterly cold. Drifting snow will become an additional hazard over the weekend.”

At these times Met Office health forecasting services are at their most useful, helping people suffering from long term conditions such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) stay healthy and out of hospital.

The Department of Health is urging people in all areas of the country to protect themselves against the risks faced during this period of cold weather. This is particularly important for older people, families with young children and people with disabilities or long-term health conditions.

Public Health Minister Gillian Merron says: “Cold weather is especially dangerous for older people or those with serious illnesses.

“The Government's ‘Keep Warm Keep Well’ campaign gives important advice to older people on how to stay fit and healthy through the winter. “Keep warm keep well” leaflets are available online at www.nhs.uk and in local GP's surgeries, pharmacies or council offices.”

The freezing conditions are forecast to continue until at least the middle of the month with further snowfall expected, especially in the south and east.

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